



Workshop on the Practical Implementation of Alignment: Learning from Good Practice

29 September 2015, CLORA, Brussels

1. Introduction

In December 2008, the Council of the European Union endorsed the concept of “Joint Programming” to promote the pooling of national research efforts in view of making better use of Europe's public R&D resources and tackling more effectively global (societal) challenges.¹ The practical implementation of Joint Programming mainly relies on the **alignment of existing or planned national research strategies, programmes and activities**. The European Research Area and Innovation Committee’s High Level Group for Joint Programming’s (GPC) defines alignment as *“the strategic approach taken by Member States to modify their national programmes, priorities or activities as a consequence of the adoption of joint research priorities in the context of Joint Programming, with a view to implement changes to improve the efficiency of investment in research at the level of Member States and the European Research Area”*.²

Alignment can however be implemented via a variety of approaches and involve various actions, instruments and actors; occur at several stages of the research programming cycle; have differing levels of ambition, and rely (or not) on EU financial instruments. Gaining a better understanding of what alignment means and how it can be implemented in practice is key to promote Joint Programming and strengthen the European Research Area.

2. Objective, expected outcomes and context

The present Workshop will discuss various **alignment approaches, actions and instruments** currently in use by European research and innovation public-to-public partnerships (P2P), with a view to gaining a **better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and identifying alignment ‘good practices’**. The event is organised in the context of the ERALEARN 2020 Project (<http://www.era-learn.eu/>) which aims to strengthen joint programming in Europe by giving practical advice to experts operating public-to-public partnerships.³ The Workshop corresponds to the first Milestone of the ERALEARN2020 Work Package 4 that will *“assess and benchmark current approaches to alignment and explore options for new modalities to better align national and/or regional activities under common research agendas”*. The Workshop is expected to contribute in particular to **Tasks 4.1 and 4.2** below.

Table 1. Overview of ERALEARN2020 Work Package 4

WP4	Analysis of existing and potential modalities for aligning national/regional activities under common research agendas
Task 4.1	Definition and typology of alignment
Task 4.2	Assessment of current approaches to alignment
Task 4.3	Exploration and assessment of novel alignment modalities
Task 4.4	Investigation of alignment modalities at trans-regional level
Task 4.5	Comparative SWOT analysis of alignment modalities

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/what-joint-programming_en.html

² ERAC-GPC 1305/1/14/REV1, 30 October 2014.

³ The ERALEARN2020 project is conducted in coordination with the GPC so as to avoid duplication of work.

The Workshop will provide an opportunity to:

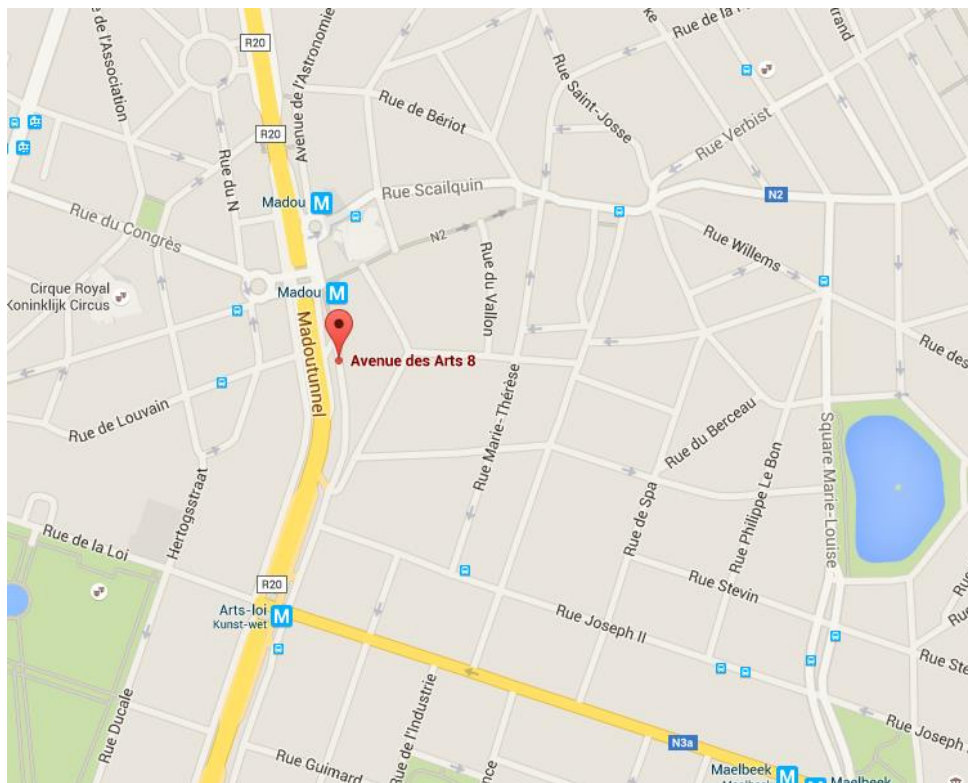
1. Discuss the ERALEARN2020's proposed **typology of alignment** approaches, actions and instruments;
2. Examine the strengths and weaknesses of **selected alignment approaches, actions and instruments** via the presentation and discussion of **practical case studies**. In order to build on the results of last year's JPIs-TO-COWORK Final Conference (19-20 February 2014) and EC-GPC Alignment Workshop (12 March 2014) and avoid duplication, the Workshop will examine concrete alignment case studies that rely on:
 - Institutional cooperation and funding;
 - Networking and capacity building amongst researchers (e.g., via Knowledge Hubs); and
 - Sharing of research infrastructure and data.
3. Consider **key barriers to alignment**, with a particular emphasis on ways to address the challenge of diverging national rules, processes and timeframes for financing and executing research and innovation (i.e., the challenge of **inter-operability**).⁴

3. Target audience

The Workshop is targeted at **practitioners** concerned with alignment at both operational and strategic levels. Expected participants include representatives from various P2P initiatives, e.g., JPIs, ERA-Nets, Art. 185 Initiatives, Knowledge Hubs and research alliances. Participants of the Implementation Group on Alignment and Inter-Operability of the European Research Area and Innovation Committee's High-Level Group on Joint Programming (GPC) will also be invited, to ensure effective coordination with this Group's work. The event is expected to include approximately 40 participants.

4. Practical details

The Workshop will be held at the **CLORA office, 8 Avenue des Arts, B1210, Brussels** (nearest Metro: Madou). The plenary sessions will take place in the **Delvaux Room** while the break-out sessions will be organised in the Delvaux, Montoyer and Magritte rooms. The event is organised by the French National Institute of Agricultural Research (INRA), which is one of the ERALEARN2020 project partners. The main contact person for this event is: Ms. Caroline Lesser, INRA/ERALEARN2020, email: caroline.lesser@paris.inra.fr ; tel: +33 1 42 75 91 39.



⁴ The issue of inter-operability will be considered in greater detail in ERALEARN2020 Task 2.2.

5. Programme

9:00-9:15	Welcome coffee	
Session 1. Introduction		
9:15-9:45	<p>Welcome, expected outcomes and structure of the event</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Heather McKhann, French Institute of Agricultural Research (INRA) - Mr. Thomas Zergoi, Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), ERALEARN2020 Project 	
Session 2. Designing an Alignment Typology		
9:45-10:15	<p>Presentation and discussion of the ERALEARN2020 alignment typology</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Mr. Luciano Catani, Italian Ministry of Education and Research (MIUR), Leader of ERALEARN 2020 Work Package 4</p> <p><i>Speaker:</i> Ms. Caroline Lesser, INRA, Leader of the ERALEARN 2020 Task 4.1</p> <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>	
10:15-10:45	Coffee break	
Session 3. Assessing Alignment Approaches, Actions and Instruments: Selected Case Studies		
10:45-12:30	<p>Presentation and discussion of specific case studies in three parallel break-out groups</p> <p>Each case will be introduced by a lead speaker (15 min.) who will address: (i) the benefits and challenges with this action/tool, (ii) possible difficulties in its implementation and key factors for successful implementation, (iii) the context in which this action/tool is suitable, and (iv) its overall value promoting public-to-public research and innovation partnerships.</p>	
	<p><i>Break-out group 1</i> <i>(Delvaux room)</i></p> <p><i>Advancing alignment via institutional cooperation and funding</i></p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Dr. Patrick Monfray, French Research Agency (ANR)</p> <p><i>Speakers :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mr. Gérard Hégron, Coordinator, JPI Urban Europe Research Alliance (UERA) - Dr. Duncan Jarvis, Programme Manager, European Metrology Research Programme (EMPR) - Ms. Dominique Mazière, Coordinator, European Energy Research Alliance (EERA) <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>	<p><i>Break-out group 2</i> <i>(Montoyer room)</i></p> <p><i>Advancing alignment via networking and capacity building amongst researchers</i></p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Dr. Heather McKhann, INRA</p> <p><i>Speakers :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Floor Brouwer, Coordinator, FACCE-JPI MACSUR Knowledge Hub - Dr. Anne Loyen, HDHL JPI DEDIPAC Knowledge Hub - Dr. Monica Dietl, Director, COST Association ((European Cooperation in Science and Technology) <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
	<p><i>Break-out group 3</i> <i>(Magritte room)</i></p> <p><i>Advancing alignment via the sharing of research infrastructure and data across countries</i></p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Dr. Christine Bunthof, Wageningen University (WUR)</p> <p><i>Speakers :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. John Hanus, Advisor, JPI Oceans Action on Deep Sea Mining - Mr. Carlo Rizzuto, President, Central European Research Infrastructure Consortium - Ms. Natalia Manola, Project Director, Open Access Infrastructure for Research in Europe (OpenAIRE) <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>	

12:30-13:30	Buffet-lunch (on-site, Picasso room and CLORA entrance hall)
13:30-14:30	<p>Reporting and discussion of the outcomes of the break-out group sessions</p> <p>All participants will reconvene in plenary mode and the Chairs/Rapporteurs of each group will report back (10-15 minutes each) and take questions from all participants.</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Mr. Luciano Catani, Italian Ministry of Education and Research (MIUR), Leader of ERALEARN 2020 Work Package 4</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dr. Patrick Monfray, Break-out Group 1 -Dr. Heather Mckhann, Break-out Group 2 -Dr. Christine Bunthof, Break-out Group 3 <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
Session 4. Overcoming a Key Barrier to Alignment: The Inter-Operability of National Rules and Procedures	
14:30-15:30	<p>Presentation and discussion of the issue of inter-operability and/or harmonisation of national rules and procedures for funding and executing research.</p> <p><i>Chair:</i> Mr. Martin Schmid, Vice-Chair of the High Level Joint Programming Group (GPC) of the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC)</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Michael Dinges, Austrian Institute of Technology, “Interoperability of processes for project selection amongst national R&D funding organisations” - Dr. Gunnel Gustafsson, Nordforsk, “Aligned reporting system in Nordic research cooperation” <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
15:30-16:00	Coffee break
Session 5. Conclusions and Next Steps	
16:00-17:00	<p>Discussion of the follow-up and wrap-up of the day</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Caroline Lesser, INRA, Leader of the ERALEARN 2020 Task 4.2 - Dr. Heather Mckhann, INRA <p><i>Open discussion</i></p>
17:00	Meeting ends